JAPAN EAST TIMOR MEMO

TL998

No. 3 May 17, 1988

Recent activities

1) "Save the Four East Timorese Students!" Post Card Campaign
In spring last year we launched a post card campaign to express our concern on the four students to the Dutch embassy in Jakarta. During three months about 700 cards were sent to Indonesia. The Dutch embassy in Jakarta, however, doesn't seem to have taken any meaningful measure to help the four students leave Indonesia. This is the second round of the campaign for the four students.

Your Excellency,
I wish to express my profound gratitude for the measures your embassy has taken to protect the lives of Antonio Goncalves, Joao Freitas da Camara, Abilio Oliveira Sereno, and Fernando Afonso da Silva.
In light of the mysterious deaths recently of two East Timorese students in Semarang and Jogjakarta, I am more than ever afraid that the above four will meet a tragic fate. Please use the diplomatic power at your disposal and help the four to leave Indonesia without delay.

一言 Message _____

名前 Name _____

住所 Address _____ JAPAN

2) The National-level Network Is Formed.
At the meeting in Nagoya on 9 and 10 April this year, the seven solidarity groups agreed to the formation of a national-level network, "Free East Timor Japan Coalition". The seven groups are those of Sendai, Tokyo, Nagoya, Osaka, Okayama, Zentsuji(new!) and Kure. The Dietmen's Forum on East Timor is expected to participate in it as an observer.

3) A New Publication.
The Japanese translation of David Selby, Human Rights, Cambridge University Press, 1987 is just out. It contains a short chapter on East Timor. The author is the director of the World Education Centre (?) of the York University and specialist on Human Rights education. The chapter on East Timor was translated by Mr Eda, secretary of the Dietmen's Forum on East Timor.

Japan's Aid to Indonesia

In fiscal 1987 Japan provided Indonesia with ¥88 billion loans of which ¥27.1 bil. was Commodity Loan and ¥13.5 bil. was Domestic Currency Loan. (These two types of loan are not used for projects.) For fiscal 1988 Indonesia asked for ¥140 bil. (¥40 bil. up from the figure given by Nihon Keizai Shinbun, see JET MEMO NO.2) which far exceeds the last year's amount. Moreover Indonesia is requesting that this be wholly either Commodity Loan or Domestic Currency Loan. (meaning, no projects this year!)

On 6 May Japanese Foreign Minister Sosuke Uno met with Ali Alatas in Jakarta where he only generally mentioned Japan's aid policy and disappointed Indonesians who had expected that he would bring a good news about the Indonesia's request on this year's aid. One Japanese Foreign Department executive official told the Asahi

Shinbun, this kind of request would curb the system of Japan's foreign cooperation which attaches importance on loans for projects and would drive Indonesia into the debt hell. (Asahi Shinbun,May 7, '88, Far Eastern Economic Review May 19, '88, p.30)

Ali Alatas Speaks on East Timor

The Indonesian weekly, Editor, featured an interview with the new Indonesian Foreign Minister, Ali Alatas (Alex). As to East Timor he simply repeats the Indonesian version of the event. It appears that by this interview he wants to convince Indonesians (this is still necessary) that the Indonesia's policy for this case is right. At the same time he needs to convince the military of the Foreign Department's initiative toward the diplomatic solution of the issue. In the former cabinet Murdani spoke more than Mochtar. But in the new cabinet the initiative apparently shifted from the military to the Foreign Department. The following is a translation of the part of his interview on East Timor. (Editor April 2, 1988, pp.75-77)

EDITOR: At the occasion of transferring Foreign Minister's post, Mr Mochtar said; The East Timor problem is finished for us, but at the international forum, the United Nations, it's not finished yet. What does it mean?

ALI ALATAS: In 1975 Portugal declared that it would decolonize (East Timor) and give the right of self-determination to the people of East Timor. Indonesia welcomed it. At the time, as you know, there was a change of administration in Portugal. The former administration was extremely old-fashioned and dictatorial, and then it was overthrown, a sort of revolution happened. Then appeared a little leftist administration which said, "We will withdraw from all our colonies, and we will let them independent."

These included East Timor. We welcomed it. We said good, because it was in accordance with the policy of anti-colonialism and we didn't have any claim over East Timor. If we had had, we would have attacked long before or done something else. We only said, "Do decolonize, or (give) the right of self-determination in an orderly, well-arranged and honest way."

For, there could be seen various groups already. One group wished integration with Indonesia, another wished independence (Fretilin), and others took middle position. The last one was majority. It was UDT. They didn't want independence but wanted direct integration with Indonesia. But it wanted "union" with Portugal. Now, we said, "Please do decolonize, we will help you." But, in fact, Portugal, or at least officials in East Timor, played off a fraud.

EDITOR: What fraud?

ALI ALATAS: Following a leftist course, they manipulated so that Fretilin would win, and they gave them weapons. Other pro-integration parties such as Apodeti, Cota, Trabalista were terrorized by Fretilin. Conflicts occured and they caused a civil war.

Imagine, 40,000 refugees flowed into West Timor. Now we had to take care of them. It was August 1975.

Well, those who wished integration with Indonesia were majority, as you know. Nevertheless in November 1975 Fretilin declared independence. Yes, it was not recognized by anybody else, except a group of African countries of the same (political) direction, former colonies, too. Since then the people of East Timor determined their fate by themselves. They chose; integration with Indonesia. Then we told Portugal and the outer world that the East Timor problem had been settled. The decolonization process was over. Indonesia didn't snap it.

EDITOR: The process at the United Nations?

ALI ALATAS: Because our understanding was not shared by the members, they could accuse us. They said, Indonesia had launched an attack. Now we began to counter-attack. Every year Portugal put the issue on the agenda of the UN. Portugal always twisted facts. We must respond, you know. Every year Portugal undermined us.

EDITOR: What stance have you taken in order to calm down the anti-integration voice?

ALI ALATAS: (He moved his shoulders.) From year to year, (I did) really many. From year to year the number of votes supporting us became bigger, although they still continued to win. At the time Indonesia permanent representative was Mr Sani, and there was Mr Kamil, too. Well, when I joined them the last voting was about to be taken. They nearly lost. This was in 1982.

EDITOR: How many votes were for and against us?

ALI ALATAS: 50 votes were against us and 48 were for. The difference was only two. The others abstained. Then the UN Secretary-General got between. He said, "How about confering among the three of us, Portugal, Indonesia and the Secretary-General? We seek an honorable way." Since that year Portugal dares not to present the issue. Every year it was postponed.

EDITOR: What has been done to increase votes supporting us?

ALI ALATAS: Yes, talking. Also lobbying and issuing statements. Every time they tried to attack, we counter-attacked. In short we questioned the facts they presented. We said, "You are wrong. The facts are these, you see. Who is the one that escaped from there? Who is the one that left the territory?" Then, finally, people were impressed by what Indonesia said.

EDITOR: How are the possibilities of the normalization of our relation with Portugal?

ALI ALATAS: Our stance remains unchanged. The one who broke the relations first was Portugal. Not we. It is they who should take the initiative, shouldn't they? It is they who decide, of course. On our side there are no particular conditions. What is important is they don't demand that the status quo be turned back and that Portugal return to repeat the decolonization process. This is not acceptable, of course.